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Social distance and the multimodal construction of the Other in sectarian song

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Abstract

This paper introduces the concept of ‘tonal gravity’ through a multimodal analysis of a YouTube video to demonstrate how multimodality is key to the construction of ‘Rule Britannia’ as a sectarian song. The analysis focuses upon the multimodal semiotics of social distance which has been a key concept in sociological and anthropological traditions in recent times. This concept offers a means to understand the social semiotic relationship between Self and Other in multimodal discourse. Following previous work in social semiotics and music studies which examine how visual composition, music and the voice have constructed social distance or expressions of intimacy, I introduce the concept of tonal gravity which extends the metaphors of semiotic space in previous work (Machin 2007; Van Leeuwen 1999) in the musical mode, to account for a fuller understanding of how music helps narrate the multimodal Self and Other. This is introduced via a close multimodal analysis of ‘Rule Britannia’ as a Rangers Football fan video which is only transformed into a sectarian text through multimodal collocation where different semiotic resources in various modes act in combination to produce a dominant Self actively prejudiced against a low Other.

Keywords: music, social distance, tonal gravity, sectarianism, multimodality, metaphor, semiotics.

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Introduction

One of the central ways in which conflict and prejudice is constructed between different social groups lies in how those groups construct identities of Self and Other. The construction of a Self and Other can be understood through the degree of social distance between them. Social distance can be thought of simply as the degree of attachment or intimacy we feel with other people. In this case study of a YouTube video, the key issue is that sectarianism, and the construction of increased social distance between two social groups, is achieved through a reading of the multimodal semiotics between the text, image and sound. In this paper I argue that the text of 'Rule Britannia' is not by itself sectarian, but that the YouTube video emerges as sectarian through the multimodal collocation of images, text and sound which act together to create an increased social distance between essentialized British-Protestant-Imperialist-Rangers Self and a Catholic-Celtic-Other. In part, this is achieved through the emphatic use of images such as flags, text and in the 'tonal gravity' of 'Rule Britannia' where emphatic rhythm and musical harmonies act together in creating a very strong sense of Self positioned in opposition to an essentialized and simplistic Other. I introduce this concept to describe the underlying metaphor for a reading of semiotic space in the musical mode, and how it maps on to other modes in a given multimodal text. This extends the work elsewhere in theorizing music as discourse and in multimodality, within a broad framework that examines musical sound as a part of social semiotic communication (Van Leeuwen 1999; Machin 2010; Tagg 2012). Using this approach I demonstrate how the author and audience can share in a multimodal understanding of the video that constructs social distance and thus sectarian agency in the song, meaning that the communicative agency of the modes acting together is key to constructing prejudice and conflict between social groups.

Music and Social Distance

Literature dealing with the relationships between music and social distance are dispersed in both disciplinary approach and research aims. However, amongst the broader sweep of research on music and cultural conflict, there has been more specifically been some significant work done on the lyrics of songs and their effect on people's perception of social distance (Eveland and others 1999), the relationships between music and conflict (O'Connell and Castelo-Branco 2010), the relationship between social distance and music social media sharing (Tran and others 2011), anti-black racism in popular music (Mullen 2012), fascist music (Machin and Richardson 2012; Shaffer 2013), music and its use in contexts of war and torture (Pettan 1998; Grant and others 2010; Grant 2012) and in the UK and Irish contexts, work on religio-ethnic discrimination and prejudice in music (Fiddler 2013; Casserly 2013; Cooper 2010; Vallely 2014). In the Scottish context, which is the focus of this article, there

has been a growth of research into sectarianism between Scottish Protestants and Catholics in recent times,¹ both in terms of the meta-statistical sociological analyses (Hinchliffe and others 2015; Justice Analytical Services 2013) and in terms of more focused ethnographic research (Goodall and others 2015). There has been little social semiotic work on the discursive or multimodal construction of sectarianism, and given the particular power of colours, flags, symbols, tunes and songs, this paper attempts to show through an insider reading of an online music video how the sectarian agency in one particular text can be located in its multimodal collocation, rather than in any single mode in the text.

In 1966 Edward T. Hall introduced the concept of ‘proxemics’ in the book *The Hidden Dimension* (1966). Proxemics proposes a social distance theory that identifies four zones of interpersonal interaction; ‘intimate’, ‘personal’, ‘social’ and ‘public’. In as far as this provides four categories for theorizing the social distance it is useful for the analysis of prejudice in multimodal texts. His work has been extended in popular music studies to examine the spatial construction of intimacy in popular music (Moore and others 2009; Dockwray and Moore 2010; Dibben 2012; Moore and others 2009). Doyle (2005) has also made a study of the auditory space in the American popular music of the early to mid twentieth century. In particular, Dockwray and Moore (2010) empirically examined 1000 recordings of popular music from 1966 to 1972. They theorized a four dimensional auditory space in which a specific canonical distribution of sound sources was established in the popular music recording industry of which the most popular (78% by 1972) emerged as the ‘diagonal mix’. This ‘diagonal mix’ has become, ‘...the paradigm for subsequent record production’ (Dockwray and Moore 2010: 186) and because it establishes the auditory norms for late Western popular music, and is surely important for any multimodal or social semiotics of social distance. In general, the voice in this analysis was overwhelmingly positioned in the centre of the ‘sound-box’ which aids the direct, personal connection with the listener, assisting the semiosis of intimacy.

In cognitive musicology however, Zbikowski (2009) based on the work of Lakoff and Turner, suggests that social intimacy in music is based upon the focused attention of one person upon another (e.g. the sonic equivalent of a lover’s gaze). Musically, he suggests in his analysis of the popular American song ‘The way you look tonight’, that this intimacy is achieved through the combination of intimate, loving textual meanings supported by rhythmical, chordal and melodic meanings that pull the attention of the listener towards the final phrase of the song ‘the way you look tonight’, mapping onto the visual focused attention of Fred Astaire’s loving gaze into Ginger Rodgers’ eyes in the song’s first performance in the 1935 film *Swing Time*. Multimodally, this mutual semantic work across different semiotic resources in the musical and visual performance suggests that it is the collocation between

modes and semiotic resources that is key to constructing intimacy. In terms of social distance, the suggestion in Zbikowski's work is that we perceive metaphorical consonances between the visual and aural modes of perception that mutually emphasise a sense of intimacy, however, further understanding of the underlying cognitive multimodal mechanisms would enable us to better understand how different modes make meaning in our lives.²

Traditionally within social psychology and sociological approaches, social distance has been a general measure used in mass statistical analyses that has included key aspects of people's identities such as their age, sexuality, ethnicity, race and religion etc. General social distance is measured by the distance between generalized social characteristics such as age, ethnicity, race, class, religion of one group and another, whilst individual social distance is perceived by individuals on a spectrum from 'just like me' to 'not at all like me'. Social distance is important in the social semiotic understanding of music, not least because reducing prejudice (and sectarianism) between social groups is largely a matter of lessening their perception of the social distance between them. Discrete multimodal cultural texts and performances such as songs, posters, films, adverts, and music videos are particularly important because they act as a focus of attention for group cultural discourses of Self and Other, and there is evidence showing that increasing cultural distance increases social distance (Magee and Smith 2013; Triandis and Triandis 1960, 1962). I would argue therefore that understanding the Other culturally is becoming ever more important in increasingly deterritorialized and polarizing societies. As psychologists have noted, there is a well observed bias for people to evaluate their own social group more favourably than others, and trials have even shown that even simply dividing a group of people into random smaller groups can generate a bias against others (Eveland and others 1999; Brewer 1991). This is important for cultural studies of prejudice and sectarianism, because the psychological evidence supports the notion that we are able to recognise prejudice and bigotry more readily in the performances of cultural groups closer to our own, than we are to those of a distant Other. In other words, prejudice between two groups within the same society or nation, is liable to be more widely recognised and problematic in that society, than prejudice against more distant Others that do not share a national or cultural identity. This places a particular significance on the multimodal texts that are consumed within a national or cultural group that contains different ethnic and social communities. So in practice, multimodal texts such as films, national and regional television programming, major historic landmarks and buildings, and online multimodal sites such as YouTube music videos, have a particular power to construct prejudice between social groups that share a broad identity but who define their difference through more specific cultural, practice-based or national identities.

In another view of social distance and musical sound that strongly supports the theorization of music as communication, Cross has proposed that music itself may have evolved to enable social cohesion: ‘Music as a communicative medium, is likely to have a significant role in minimising within-group conflict or, to put it another way, in collaboratively establishing a degree of social equilibrium’ (Cross 2011). He cites examples from across the ethnomusicological literature that demonstrate that music, unlike in the late modern West, is, and has been used, as a means of ritual and to enable the peaceable resolution to social situations where there are conflictual and uncertain social dynamics (Cross 2012). He particularly emphasizes the highly temporal nature of music and its potential for ‘entrainment’. That is, the rhythmical synchronisation of the focused attention of group of people to enable participants to align their sense of time together to produce a sense of shared purpose (Clayton and others 2005; Berger and Turov 2012; Clayton 2013). Cross suggests these two factors are part of the means by which music helps to resolve potentially conflictual situations. He labels the agency of music in focusing people’s attention upon an indeterminate communication as ‘floating intentionality’ which is one of the key means that allows music to be so powerful in constructing cohesion and social ties. Of course, given that this is possible in music, it clearly has the ability to do the exact opposite and to function as an agent of conflict and division between people and social groups. But in this model, music has a power to bring people together somatically into a shared sense of purpose that in part at least depends on its semiotic ambiguity. This ‘floating intentionality’ of music is of course rendered more specific in multimodal texts because of the multimodal combination of semantically specific text and images with the more ambiguous sound as can be seen in the case study below. Cross’s evolutionary thesis on music’s development does place social distance at the heart of any understanding of music in multimodal communication.

Theo van Leeuwen, in addition to making a significant contribution to the semiotic understanding of music and multimodality (see for instance 1999, 2004, 2012), notes that one of the key factors in hearing social distance is the sound of the human voice. He gives various semiotic resources relating to volume, timbre, aural perspective, etc. that now are particularly variable through modern recording technology to produce distinct social distance through the use of reverb and other techniques (Van Leeuwen 1999: 27–8). Following Van Leeuwen (2004) and others, in sonic texts the composition in semiotic space is key to the perception of social distance and acts alongside the other key multimodal categories of rhythm, information linking and dialogue. Where there remains more work to be done, is in the theorization and understanding of how instrumental music and other non-vocal sounds can contribute to the multimodality. Less attention has been directed towards the semiotic and multimodal affordances of melodic and harmonic material (but see the

various approaches taken in Van Leeuwen 1999; Machin 2010; Tagg 2012). This paper extends the understanding of musical resources in multimodality through the examination of tonal gravity.

Music and Tonal Gravity

‘Tonal Gravity’ as a musicological concept was first introduced in 1953 by George Russell to explain his unique and total theory of music. His proposition of ‘tonal gravity’ sought to explain the sonic relationships between different notes of various musical scales, based upon the principle musical relationship of a fifth which rested upon the sonic characteristics of music which are already latent in harmonic relationships themselves (for an overview see Monson 1998). I am however using the term quite differently in multimodal semiotics in order to define one of the key sonic metaphors in music, and how it can be understood in multimodal semiotics. Essentially, I am proposing that tonal gravity can be used to provide the underlying metaphor for a reading of semiotic space in the musical mode and how it maps on to other modes in a given multimodal text. Therefore, ‘tonal gravity’ can be used to explain how different modes relate to each other metaphorically, and can be used to explain and analyse metaphorical constructions of proximity, salience and verticality.

Firstly, taking the ‘salience’ of the musical mode in a multimodal text and its semiotic relationships to other modes, tonal gravity can be used to explain the relationship between the salience of sound to the visual salience or gravity. Van Leeuwen defines ‘salience’ as one of the three key aspects of composition—essentially the semiotic weight of individual semiotic resources in a multimodal text, judged by how much attention we devote to it (Van Leeuwen 2004). In this way, tonal gravity as a semiotic concept is similar to the outline of the salience of different notes of the major scale given in Griffith and Machin (2014: 87–88). It is also important in social semiotic work that musical sound itself is not impenetrable to non-musicologists and in common with other work in this area (Van Leeuwen 1999; Griffith and Machin 2014), I will avoid as much as possible musicological terminology in the analysis. Machin and Griffith demonstrate their conception of the salience of different notes of the scale to semiotic meaning potentials. They argue that each of the 7 notes of the scale in Western music has the following broad meaning potentials:

Note	Meaning potential
1	Anchoring note
2	Something unfinished or about to happen
3	A state of happy or sad/chilling note

4	Building, moving forwards or creating space
5	Anchoring note
6	Pleasurable longing, nostalgia
7	Wistful or painful

Table reproduced from Griffith and Machin (2014: 88).

This table represents a reading of the meaning potentials of each note of the common Western scale, and in general terms is a useful in explaining for the what I term the ‘tonal gravity’ of each note of the scale. However, one of the key problems of musical meaning in multimodal texts is the semantic ambiguity of musical melodies. It does not follow for instance that repeated use of notes 1 and 5 will automatically result in a strong feeling of anchoring and a feeling of emphatic security. If those notes are repeated in a melody, their semiotic significance depends both on a semiotic reading of the other modes in the text and on a number of other factors in the musical mode, such as their rhythmical salience and the harmony that accompanies the melody. Or in other words, the other musical sounds that accompany the main tune. That is why to properly understand the semiotic significance of music within a multimodal text, it is necessary to provide both a narrative semiotic reading of the auditory mode, as well as an analysis of how it relates to the other modes in the text.

Crucially, in any discussion of the salience of tonal gravity in a multimodal text is the understanding that pitches are not primarily understood musically in terms of their vertical distance from one another. As Griffith and Machin’s table above demonstrates through the use of the term ‘anchoring’, note 5 of the scale has a much stronger relationship to note 1 of the scale; and as such has more tonal gravity as the notes agree musically with each other. In this way notes 5 and 1 have greater tonal gravity to each other than say for instance notes 1 and 2. Technically, this is because of the physics of sound; in very broad terms, notes 1 and 5 share more sonic characteristics than notes 1 and 2. That is why notes with a strong tonal gravity might be vertically further away from each other, yet still be able to provide a stronger sense of salience in the musical mode because of their relationship to the overall musical key or framework in the text.

That is just one reason why we cannot simply translate the spatial metaphors prevalent in visual multimodal analysis directly into the auditory mode, the same conceptual metaphors might be understood differently in sound, than they are in text or image. What it does suggest however, is that more analytical work is needed to develop an understanding of how different multimodal concepts map onto each other across the different modes of text, image, sound, taste etc. Improving this understanding of the underlying metaphors could

provide us with a better understanding of how multimodal collocation and metaphor functions within and across different modes.

Secondly, tonal gravity as a measure of semiotic space can also be used to provide a semiotic reading of the centre—margin metaphor in a multimodal text (Van Leeuwen 2004: 205). This maps strong tonal gravity onto the centre of semiotic space and weak tonal gravity onto the more distant boundaries of semiotic space. This also suggests a reading of Self (centre) and Other (margin) which is particularly useful for multimodal analyses of social distance. In this way, musical elements that provide a strong sense of tonal gravity such as notes 1 and 5 can be understood as constructing a sense of Self that relates to the principle narrative voice expressed in other modes in the text, and weaker tonal gravity, such as found in notes 2, 7 or 6 for instance might represent a more distant or marginal position from the principal narrative voice (Self). This positioning of Self and Other is crucial to a semiotic reading of social distance, and hence to the semiotic construction of Othering and belonging in multimodal texts that include music. There are of course many other musical elements expressed in sound that all contribute to our understanding of multimodal texts. In most Western music of course, these include rhythm, timbre, motivic content, and harmony. Tonal gravity can also be used as an analytical category for understanding the musical harmony of a multimodal text as well as the melody. Musical harmony also should not be off limits to the non-musicologist semiotician, and tonal gravity offers a means to understanding this sonic element in multimodal texts. In short, a strong sense of tonal gravity in the musical harmony would imply (in the Western tradition) harmonies that do not move far from the chords (or triads) of a particular key signature. Griffith and Machin's table could therefore also be read as a description of the meaning potential of basic chords in music. So that in the same way, chord 1 has musically more in common with chord 5 and also with chord 4 than it does with chords 2, 3, 6 or 7. Machin discusses these tonal relationships in terms of the anchoring of the melody to the harmony (Machin 2010: 106–111). In other words, for many of us; it is tonal gravity (amongst many other things) in the instrumental accompaniment to the song *Always on my mind*, that might make us feel 'closer' to Willie Nelson,³ than when it is sung by Michael Bublé.⁴

Sectarianism in multimodal analysis

The advantage of adopting a multimodal discourse analysis for sectarianism and for other prejudicial communication lies in the use of combined social semiotic readings of sectarian performances that can move beyond the simple literal interpretation of texts such as song lyrics or videos. Multimodal social semiotics is an ideal approach for the analysis of sectarian

musical performances precisely because of the interplay between music, lyrical text, images such as flags and colours, and consequently, could also generate beneficial materials for educational alleviation of sectarianism as a social process because the sectarian agency is partly located in the multimodal collocation of signs in these texts. Furthermore, when listening to a football song for instance, the semiotic reading of the same song will be different for listeners who identify with the principle narrative voice (the Self of the text) than for the narrator's Others. This begins to get more complex when one starts to take into account the various possible narratological voices that can be understood in any text, and particularly complex in musical texts where verbal text can work both with and against the other musical materials. All this complexity both around the meaning of signs and the social situation of the reader of multimodal texts means that it is essential to consider both the interplay between modes alongside the cultural insider's perspective in order to be able to approach any sort of meaningful analysis.

In the following case study of a YouTube football supporters video, I have adopted an analytical commentary based upon the multimodal scheme laid out by Van Leeuwen (2004). The key categories outlined by Van Leeuwen in multimodal texts as communicative events are:

- 1) Rhythm
- 2) Composition
- 3) Information linking (or 'cultural intertextuality')
- 4) Dialogue

(adapted from Van Leeuwen 2004: 179)

Taking this approach to the analysis of multimodal texts allows one to consider the interplay of modes, or the multimodality of the text itself within each of these analytical categories, rather than the more synthetic strategy of examining the text in each singular mode (e.g. image, text, sound) which runs counter to our perceptual instincts where multimodal texts are understood simultaneously⁵ and meta-narratives and social meanings perceived through time as we watch, listen and read multimodal texts such as a music video, television interview or film. In this paper I consider each of these social semiotic categories in the text in turn and highlight the multimodal interaction which produce sectarian meaning. The video discussed here was uploaded 28th October 2008 to YouTube, and at the time of writing is still available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxADv7w8YfM>.

1) Rhythm

Rhythm in multimodal analysis is the central analytical category that relates to our temporal understanding of texts. Not just how we understand them through time, but also how semiosis ebbs and flows with tension and relaxation experienced through time. As Van Leeuwen acknowledges (2004: 181), rhythm and composition are the two most important sources of multimodal cohesion. In musical theory, rhythmical analysis usually begins from the position of understanding both the metre and tempo as distinct aspects of rhythm. Metre is essentially about the underlying temporal framework for a multimodal text, and tempo can be thought of the surface structures of time and experience, how fast or how slow, or how stressed or emphatic sound can be in our understanding.

In this YouTube video there is a fixed pulse of around 90 beats per minute which slows down gradually towards the end of the song. This means that there is a fixed and fairly inflexible metre that provides a framework for all of the multimodal interaction in the video. Musically, this song is emphatically 4/4 in structure and heavily emphasises the key notes of the music (G major), which provides a stability and feeling of security in an unchanging underlying rhythmical framework which is important in the creation of strong sense of Self throughout the video. The performance of the text of the song also tends to place key terms that identify the Self on emphatic beats in the music. For instance, key terms such as 'Britons' and 'Rule Britannia', all appear at the beginning of new phrases which emphasizes their salience in the multimodal text creating a strong sense of Self. The strong rhythmical emphases in the video also suggests a militarization with a strict martial 'affect' that is underlined by the imperialist message of the lyrical text. This martial meaning tends to push out any sense of intimacy thereby increasing the social distance to anyone who does not identify with the religio-ethnic Self in the narrative. The salience of the martial tune as well is underscored by the melismatic nature of the lyrical text; in other words, many of the words such as 'never' and 'first arose' are sung across many notes rather than one note-per-syllable. This increases the salience of the melody and martial orchestration which further enhances a strong military, British Self, and effectively pushes away Others who do not identify with it. Much of the visual rhythm in this multimodal text is found in flags and symbols of Britishness and Rangers. These are two-dimensional and when heard with the emphatic melody and sonic text, perform a very singular, emphatic rhythm which leaves no room for plurality. In this way, the rhythm of the words, images and tune construct a strong, emphatic sense of a British-Rangers-Imperialist-Self which is collocated with other modes in the text to construct sectarian meanings.

2) Composition

The ‘composition’ of a multimodal text approached from a social semiotic perspective is about how the different modes are ‘articulated in space’ (Van Leeuwen 2004: 198). Things visually in the foreground of an image are understood as more prominent than those in the background, giving them more semiotic ‘weight’ and therefore more semiotic salience. Crucial of course in musical sound is the metaphor of centre—margin expressed as tonal gravity in musical sound, which I argue is key to the social semiotic construction of Self (centre) and Other (margin). In this video of Rule Britannia, when one combines this sense of a strong Self constructed in the lyrical text with the musical text then the multimodal effect is to create a strong, emphatic sense of Self that is crucial both for creating belonging amongst the Rangers fans who view the video, but also to the construction of their low Other; the Celtic fans who are explicitly signalled in this video.

In the video, the overriding compositional device used across modes is the emphatic and heavy emphasis of a singular, uncompromising Rangers-British-Protestant-Self. Composition is key to this semiotic construct as is clear from the opening seconds of the video. In the tune of Rule Britannia, there is a strong tonal gravity established around the tonal centre of G major or chord 1. This is also reflected in the composition of the flags, where there is strong visual gravity drawing the eye to the centre of the flags where in this case for example the Rangers logo is collocated with Britishness through superimposing the football club’s logo at the centre of the Union flag at 0.25 secs:



Musically, the composition after establishing the emphatic tonal gravity of G major (chord 1) works throughout the rest of the video to sonically anchor the melody and harmony strongly to chord 1 which through the use of tonal gravity as a metaphor for the centre-as-Self and margin-as-Other, produces an uncompromising military and emphatic sense of self both in the musical and visual composition. Other musical notes with strong tonal gravity such as 5 (D), and 3 (B) are also used at key points in the music to emphasize this strong sense of Self in the tonal gravity. This is a common aspect of military melodies and national anthems, where an emphatic sense of Self is desired to unite the people singing or listening under a singular identity. The note 4 (C) is used as a point of relative instability in the

melody to move the tune along and back to the more consonant and stable notes of 1 (G), 3 (B) and 5 (D) (see also Machin 2010: 109). There is therefore, little dissonance in the melody, which is also reflected in the strongly diatonic and straightforward harmony which accompanies the choral performance in this video.⁶ This strong tonal gravity is reinforced also through the use of a small and cohesive melodic range. The melody only uses a span of a 9th (i.e. 9 vertical steps between the bottom and top notes in the tune) which is unusual for a classical melody and more common in popular and folk traditions; because of their suitability for the vernacular (and untrained) singing voice. This is another reason why the relatively straightforward and memorable tune for Rule Britannia may have found favour with football fans. This strong tonal gravity emphatically supports the construction of a Rangers-British-Protestant-Self which semiotically reinforces the salience of the Self in the video, and when read in combination with the textual and visual sectarian signs, pushes any notion of the Celtic-Other away. The song also adds to the salience of this text, employing word painting with the rising pitch steps of 'arose, arose' to the ideal, or vertically high position in the melody of the song.

Repetition is used throughout the musical arrangement, and also in the visual text. The Union Jack is repeated often alongside motifs of Rangers Football Club to reinforce the identity of the principle narrative voice. This sense of Self is also signalled not just by visual flags and football club motifs, but also at 2.00 mins by a photograph of Rangers football fans waving Union Jack flags on match day:



This adds to the sense of emphatic Self, and the very strong tonal gravity also contributes to the emphasis of the Self in semiotic space, when combined with the text and visual modes, specifically constructs the British-Protestant-Imperialist-Rangers Self, thereby excluding (both explicitly and implicitly) their Others.

3) Cultural Intertextuality (or 'information linking')

Van Leeuwen's conception of 'information linking' refers both to the explicit textual conjunctions (e.g. 'next', 'and then', 'previously') which elaborate, extend and explain the various relationships between elements of a text, and also to the relations between image and text. For instance images can make the text or speech more specific or the text can make the image more specific (Van Leeuwen's elaboration and specification 2004: 230), but these multimodal relationships can also extend the semiotic information in the text. In cultural studies and musicology, it is the repeated collocation of cultural objects, motifs, text and signs leads to intertextuality, usually understood in discourse analysis as the shared semantic relationships between elements of one text and another, and considered within a broad textual framework that includes co-text (relations within the same text), context (the socio-cultural and historical situatedness of the text) and intertextuality (the shared semantic relationships between the text and other texts). Therefore, I suggest that it is necessary when considering the types and ways in which information is linked both within a multimodal text and to other texts, to consider this information as a form of cultural intertextuality, which can include both cultural insider's semiotic readings of a multimodal text as well as outsider's, in order that analysis reflects the real world understandings of videos, images, films and other multimodal texts. Particularly in relation to divisive and conflictual meanings, it is essential to recognise the cultural intertextuality of certain semiotic signifiers such as colours, tunes, songs, names, etc., otherwise semiotic analysis bypasses any usefulness in real educational, policy, or intercultural contexts.

This video is thick with cultural intertextuality, particularly because of the emphatic use of flags, text and signs of ethno-religious and football belonging. 'Britain' within the lyrical text assumes a female anthropomorphised form, with the imperial pre-eminence which is attributed to 'heaven' and God. This makes the metaphorical claim that the hegemonic, imperialist and Unionist British identity performed here is natural and God-given. The text also signals otherworldly, or spiritual explanation for the racial superiority of the 'Britons' via the 'charter of the land' with 'guardian angels' singing 'her strain'.

A crucial aspect in this video is the multimodal collocation which creates sectarian agency. A textual reading of the lyrics of 'Rule Britannia' alone would not elicit any inter-ethnic conflict or literal reading of prejudice other than the strong imperialist sentiment that is evident in the literal reading of the text:⁷

When Britain first, at heaven's command,
Arose from out the azure main,
Arose, arose, from out the azure main,
This was the charter, the charter of the land,
And guardian angels sang her strain.

Rule Britannia!
Britannia rules the waves
Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.
Rule Britannia!
Britannia rules the waves.
Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.

The original text comes from James Thomson's poem 'Rule Britannia' which was performed in 1740 as the finale of William Arne's 18th century masque *Alfred*. It originally celebrated the early modern notion of free democracy of the British, '...a fitting anthem for imperialists' (Marcus 1992: 140). The term 'Britannia' has of course been appropriated many times over centuries for various ideological ends, from its first use on Roman coins to denote the colonization of Britain to its use by 18th century Whigs as defenders of British freedoms (Ramsland 1942), to its political rehabilitation in 1997 with New Labour's 'Cool Britannia' slogan. The singing of 'Rule Britannia' has been commonplace at Rangers matches by their fans. A literal reading of the song, such as that by Moorhouse's informant suggest that the song, like other patriotic songs, including Irish songs such as *The Fields of Athenry*, are in fact not sectarian because of the absence of sectarian intent, or literal prejudicial meaning within the lyrics (Moorhouse 2006: 36). However, in this video, the collocation and prominent use of the Red Hand of Ulster visual motif at 0.36 seconds into the video creates a collocation of meaning between the visual motifs of The Red Hand of Ulster, The Rangers Football Club sign and the melody of Rule Britannia and The St Andrews and Union Jack flags:



Semiotically, the 'Red Hand of Ulster' motif is thick with meanings and has been appropriated in many ways in history. It has been appropriated by many as a symbol of Ulsterness, it has also been claimed by Irish Republicans due to its early modern Gaelic origins, the Gaelic Athletic Association and the Ulster Defence Army have all claimed the symbol at various times. However, in the context of this video, the red hand signals a British-Protestant symbolism to Rangers football club and through collocation with its melody, alters the meaning of the melody to Rule Britannia. The hand also signifies increased social distance, not only by emphatically emphasising the Self as Protestant-British, but also by visually putting up a barrier between the Self and the Celtic-Other. The symbol of the hand in and of itself does not yet fully constitute sectarian *intent* on behalf of the creators of this video, but that emerges early in the video at 0.45 seconds where this image appears:



This multimodal collocation of Rangers Football Club motif on the Union Jack flag with the words ‘Big Jock Knew’ signals the sectarian intention of the video. The phrase ‘Big Jock Knew’ is a textual synecdoche for a larger vernacular accusation by Rangers supporters against Celtic Football club that Jock Stein (Celtic manager 1965-1978) covered up a paedophile sex abuse scandal at the Celtic Boys Club (see McKerrell 2012b). This is a key sectarian marker within the song, and also provides the evidence that the song is actively sectarian in intent. This directly implicates sectarian prejudice against Scottish Catholics and Celtic supporters through the semantic convergence via a chain of assumptions of Celtic—Catholic—Irish—Child abusers, constructed through the songs and chants of Rangers supporters directed at Celtic supporters. Moreover, through multimodal collocation it constructs Rule Britannia as a sectarian tune.

I would argue that in a strict sense, for a sectarian or indeed any reading of social semiotic prejudice to be recognised as such, requires that the social distance between the Self and Other must be in some way signalled within the performance. In this case study, the emphasis is semiotically laid upon a dominant and strong Self positioned against a low Other. However, there are other social semiotic means of performing prejudice in multimodal songs. Mullen for instance has shown how late 19th and early 20th century performers of minstrel shows and ‘coon songs’ clearly focused upon constructing a multimodal ape-like racist construct of the black Other for white audiences (Mullen 2012). Clearly, in vernacular culture however, even straightforward celebrations of group identity can be perceived as offensive or inflammatory by their Others, purely because of the historical contexts of inter-group conflict. But in this multimodal text, sectarianism finds its agency and power not through one single mode, but through the multimodal collocation which transforms Rule Britannia from the music of British imperialism, to a strongly divisive and sectarian piece of music understood in Scottish football culture. That is why literalist readings of sectarian songs texts sometimes do not immediately reveal directly sectarian intention on behalf of the composer-creator, but through an understanding of insider’s cultural synecdoches and multimodal collocation, sectarian agency can be located in the multimodal meanings itself.

At 1.02 mins, again the Union Jack flag is shown with the words ‘Derrys Walls’ is superimposed above the Rangers Football Club motif.



This can of course be read as another sectarian collocation, as one of the popular chants by supporters includes references to the Derry's Walls:

Follow follow, we will follow Rangers,
Up the Falls, Derry's Walls,
We will follow on,
To Dundee, Hamilton, f**k the Pope and the Vatican,
If they go to Dublin we will follow on.⁸

In this way the Pope and the Catholic Church itself is directly implicated in text and is immediately understood by insiders through the synecdoche of 'Derry's Walls'. Another reading of the phrase 'Derry's Walls' would cite it as a celebration of the defense of Londonderry—Derry by Ulster plantation protestants in the 17th century, who built and maintained the walls of Derry against raids by Irish republicans. However, the multimodal rendering of strong visual symbols of Rangers Football Club, The Red Hand of Ulster, alongside the musical use of the strongly British tune Rule Britannia and the cultural intertextuality of the Rangers football chant 'Follow Follow' combine multimodally to imbue the total text with thick sectarian meaning and to strongly distance the Celtic-Other from the Rangers-Self. In this way, social distance pushing the Celtic-Other away from the Rangers-Self transforms Rule Britannia into a sectarian song.

4) Dialogue

Dialogue is key to multimodal texts and in social semiotics is largely about the temporal exchange and unfolding narrative of communication. It is understood in terms such as call

and response or initiating move and response, offer, command, refusal, and so on. These can all be thought of as narratological moves that emerge when one closely examines the narrative of a text. Crucially of course, what may be offered as a question in the text, can be responded to visually or musically which makes this area of analysis complex. The analytical value to examining the dialogue in multimodal texts lies in their ability to categorize the temporal narrative of communication. Thus dialogue presents a means to understanding how multimodal narrative is framed and understood through key categories such as question, answer, initiating move, explanation, continuation, rejection, acceptance etc. Alongside rhythm, these dialogic categories provide us with a means for explaining how multimodal texts work through time.

Predictably, there is little dialogue in this video which is a function of its deliberately sectarian purpose of providing a singular and unifying sense of Self and signalling a low Other. The meta-narrative throughout the song is largely establishing a singular British-Protestant-Rangers-Imperialist Self and then from around 0.45 seconds, the Other is signalled multimodally in the text through the textual synecdoches of 'Big Jock Knew' and 'Derry's Wall's'. The chorus of 'Rule Britannia...' deals with the British naval strength within the imperial imagination. That 'Britons' will never be slaves also makes straightforward reference to Britons as superior and dominating, increasing the social distance between the race of 'Britons' and their Others. So there is little dialogue as such within the text, but much reinforcement of the fundamental position of the hegemonic Self. Towards the end of the video however, the image of a skeletal imperialist British warrior appears at 1.50 minutes:



The collocation of the skeletal, imperialist British aggressor is celebrated in the imagery of this section; this visual apparition multimodally works with the emphatic tune and the emphatic notion of 'Britons' in the lyrical text to semiotically perform a socially aggressive and distancing meta narrative that pushes any Other identities out suggesting a radically intolerant and sectarian social space.

Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to show how drawing upon analytical resources from social semiotics, musicology, social psychology and discourse analysis can allow us to create an analytical framework that is capable of dealing with divisive multimodal texts. Text, image and sound are complex when understood together as interacting and mutually dependent modes in communication. Clearly there is great flexibility and power in multimodal texts because of the wide array of semiotic resources available across different modes. In this example, this video from YouTube demonstrates how sectarianism can be understood multimodally, through the collocation of different semiotic resources in order to create a singular and emphatic British-Protestant-Imperialist-Rangers Self pushing away a Celtic-Catholic Other. The way this is done in this video is by constructing a hegemonic and emphatic Self in image, text and music and by signaling the other multimodally within the text. The tonal gravity of music is I believe a useful means for accessing the metaphorical significance of musical sound in semiotic space. In this case, the very strong tonal gravity of the song helps to create an emphatic, singular sense of Self read through a semiotic mapping of tonal gravity onto the centre (Self) to margin (Other). This conceptual position alongside various other multimodal resources increases the social distance between these two groups and shuts out any pluralist readings of the video. Important also is an insider's cultural understanding of the intertextuality of these different signs and motifs, which is crucial to fully realizing the sectarian agency in this text.

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[wordcount: 8482]

¹For a historical discussion of sectarianism in Scotland see (Gallagher 1987).

²Tangential to this paper, but important for a more robust multimodal social semiotics is an understanding of the underlying cognitive basis for multimodality. Embodied conceptual metaphor appears to offer the most convincing case for this to date, but simple homological analyses can be problematic (see for instance McDonald's discussion of 'tenseness' 2013). Furthermore, the social semiotic analysis of pitch often relies upon straightforward metaphors such as rising pitch = greater tension, descending pitch = relaxation. This may well be true in many contexts, but the fact that this is not an obvious given, is provided by Zbikowski who cites the other ways in which different musical cultures have metaphorically understood pitch: high as sharp—low as heavy (ancient Greek music theorists); high as small—low as large (Java/Balinese musicians); high as young—low as old (Suya Indians in Amazon Basin) (Zbikowski 1997: 5). However, if we accept that in the late modern West, that at the level of conceptual metaphor, pitch relationships are relationships in vertical space, and that higher pitch means higher up in vertical space; we can see how conceptual metaphor might provide a useful basis for examining the semiosis of different modes and their multimodal meanings. Work to better understand the cognitive basis for music in multimodal semiosis is underway (see for instance Kühl 2007; Johnson 2007; Cross 2012; Godøy and Leman 2009; Forceville and Urios-

Aparisi 2009; Saslaw 1996) but further culturally sensitive interdisciplinary research between social semiotics, musicology and cognitive science could also contribute to the development of multimodal analysis across many domains and resolve the problems of simple homologous relationships between modes and social experience which currently support much social semiotic analysis. These types of simple analogous relationships between broadly experienced semiotic categories and musical sound undermine the importance of the flow of multimodal experience and cultural relativism.

³Willie Nelson sings 'Always on my mind' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7f189ZovoY>.

⁴Michael Bublé sings 'Always on my mind' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-_mQ4HcGkA.

⁵There is some good evidence now from cognitivist science that supports the notion that complex meanings are perceived simultaneously in real time (McKerrell 2012a).

⁶ In relation to choral singing it may be that voices perceived as moving together in unison are perceived as more semiotically consonant, and that consonance can signal closer proximity, and increasing dissonance signifying increasing social distance. Rudolf Arnheim for instance has found in visual art, that objects moving in the same direction are perceived together, as with the '...Sharks and the Jets in the film version of West Side Story' (Johnson 2007:230).

⁷Given these strong and shamefully racist imperialist connotations in the text and the song itself it surprises this author that it is still regularly performed at the BBC Proms and other major British cultural events.

⁸Retrieved 05/11/2013 from: <http://www.celtic.vitalfootball.co.uk/article.asp?a=124111>